

Taylor University

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Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Campus Events

1-20-2020

Writing Contest (Winning Piece)

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Recommended Citation

Ito, Katie, "Writing Contest (Winning Piece)" (2020). *Martin Luther King Jr. Day*. 6.
<https://pillars.taylor.edu/mlk/6>

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A Liturgy for MLK Day
by Katie Ito, Taylor University

Leader: Maker of the Universe, Giver of all that is Good,

People: We are here again in awe of the weighted richness of this world that you have so thoughtfully and joyfully created. We praise you for all of the countries and places we come from to attend Taylor University.

Leader: We praise you for the many languages that each of us share so that we might express the Gospel in its most whole and pure form. We praise you for the various colors of skin, shape of eyes, and textures of hair. For all of them proclaim your glorious, infinite design. We praise you for the spices, flavors, and aromas of international cuisines and local DC meals. We praise you for the unique traditions and music found within each culture that reflect your beauty and full delight.

We praise you for the dialects of hospitality that you have so graciously shown through others that have made space for us. In this, you have revealed the Wedding Feast of the Lamb that is to come.

People: In the face of this hospitality, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole hearts.

Leader: We have not treasured our neighbor that you have entrusted to us. We urge you, Father, let our hearts with love be stirred to move toward our neighbor as you had first moved towards us. Make us aware that every fiber and cell of their being reveals a piece of who you are.

With fractured hearts, we remember Abraham Smith and Thomas J. Shipp, two African-American men that were beaten and lynched in August of 1930 by a violent mob only twenty minutes from this campus.

We grieve together with their families and over the city of Marion. Break our pride and soften us so that we might see how we have done harm corporately and individually.

People: Have mercy upon us and show mercy through us!

Leader: We weep over the loss of four little girls that were murdered by white supremacists in the basement of a Baptist church in Birmingham, Alabama while changing into their choir robes where they were to sing before the pastor would preach a sermon titled, "A Love That Forgives."

People: How long, O Lord, until your justice rolls down?

Leader: We ask that you make these evils incomprehensible to us, so that we might cling more desperately to you and your perfect mercy and justice.

People: Keep us present in this pain!

Leader: We lament the Charleston Church Massacre in 2015 where nine of our African-American brothers and sisters were targeted and killed after finishing a Bible study.

These are the deep wounds we bring to you, Abba Father. May this stinging pain remind us daily of your bleeding heart that circulates the world. In humility, we ask that our tears be sanctified as we weep with those that have been harmed.

People: Lord, have mercy upon us and show mercy through us!

Together: Keep this wound open until the day of your second coming, when all things shall be restored.